

5.6 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This section addresses the affected biotic environment, the environmental consequences of the proposed PEF Expansion, and the Applicant's proposal to apply the applicable Conditions of Certification for the existing PEF to the PEF Expansion.

The PEF Expansion consists of a nominal 160 MW simple cycle combustion turbine generator. The PEF Expansion area will be approximately two acres located entirely within the existing PEF 31-acre site boundary. The PEF Expansion requires no modification to the existing PEF offsite linear facilities (e.g., electric transmission line, fuel gas supply line, or water supply line). The PEF Expansion will use the existing PEF administration and control, warehouse and shop, and water treatment buildings. Site access and onsite roadways are common with the existing PEF. Figure 3.1-1 of this application depicts the new facilities required for the PEF Expansion within the footprint of the existing PEF.

5.6.1 Affected Environment

The affected environment for the PEF Expansion is as described in 99-AFC-7. The Biological Resources Section 5.6 of 99-AFC-7 is included for reference as part of Attachment E of this application.

Additional information on the biology and the habitat compensation program was submitted as part of 99-AFC-7. Both Section 5.6 and Appendix N from 99-AFC-7 were submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (docketed as part of 99-AFC-7 with the CEC on August 29, 2000) in order to comply with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. The current biology-related permits for the existing PEF are being docketed with the CEC under separate cover. In addition, extensive biological resource data has been documented and submitted to the CEC as part of construction compliance requirements. A summary of these materials is also included in Attachment E to this application.

5.6.1.1 Habitat Types

Natural habitats in the rights-of-way for linear facilities of the existing PEF include native grassland, non-native grassland, freshwater marsh, and riparian scrub. Other habitats that occur in the project area are ruderal (weedy) and agriculture. The dominant habitat is non-native grassland with scattered ruderal fields in previously disturbed areas. The existing plant site is located in an area that was a ruderal, grazed field. Freshwater marsh and riparian scrub habitats occur outside the plant site in a narrow corridor along the banks of Pastoria Creek and other small ephemeral drainages. A total of 169 plant species were identified during project-related surveys to support the application for the PEF. Descriptions of the habitat types, aquatic resources, maps of their occurrences in the project survey area, and a list of all

plant species observed during field surveys, are provided in the Biology Technical Report (Appendix N) from 99-AFC-7.

5.6.2 Environmental Consequences

Because the PEF Expansion will share common facilities and identical footprints of disturbance with the existing PEF, the site disturbance remains unchanged from the existing PEF. Consequently, no new impacts to biological resources are expected as a result of the PEF Expansion.

5.6.3 Mitigation Measures

The Applicant proposes to apply the applicable Conditions of Certification for the existing PEF to the PEF Expansion. The Conditions of Certification for the PEF are included in Section 9.0 of this application. With the implementation of the applicable Conditions of Certification, no significant unavoidable adverse impacts to biological resources are anticipated due to construction or operation of the PEF Expansion.

5.6.4 LORS Compliance

The PEF Expansion will comply with applicable LORS related to biological resources. A complete list of the applicable LORS for biological resources is included in Section 7.0 LORS of this application.

5.6.5 References

The references for biological resources for 99-AFC-7 are applicable to the PEF Expansion. The references from Section 5.6 of 99-AFC-7 are included for reference as part of Attachment E of this application.